

JOINT POWERS PARTNERS

A joint powers entity is a public agency created pursuant to Section 6500 et seq. of the Government Code that allows two or more government agencies to combine forces by jointly exercising their powers with respect to a specific purpose or set of objectives. The Conservancy has joined with various local government entities to forge these partnerships with the intent of working cooperatively to preserve public parkland.

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy is a member of seven joint powers authorities, including the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, the Mountains Conservation and Education Authority, the Eastern Ventura County Conservation Authority, the Santa Clarita Watershed Recreation and Conservation Authority, the Whittier-Puente Hills Conservation Authority, the Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority, and the Baldwin Hills Regional Conservation Authority. These joint powers agencies function as legally separate government entities with their own governing boards. Central to their success is the ability to complement the work of other organizations protecting land in the Southern California mountains by using unique techniques to acquire and improve open space and parklands, affording educational opportunities, and providing stewardship for a wide variety of public park and open space resources.

Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority—MRCA

Of the seven joint powers, the most active and closely involved with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy is the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority. As it was originally envisioned, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy would acquire land and transfer it to the National Park Service, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, or local agencies. In the mid-1980s it became clear that many other agencies were either unable or unwilling to assume new management responsibilities for land purchased by the Conservancy. Therefore, in 1985, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy created a joint powers authority with the Conejo Recreation and Park District and the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District in order to add support to land conservation and management within the mountains.

While the MRCA is a legally separate government entity with its own four-member governing board, its hallmark is that it works in close cooperation with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The MRCA has seven major functions: administration and finance, acquisition and legal services, natural resources and planning, operations and ranger services, construction, public affairs, and education and interpretation.

Each year, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority are able to work together to acquire critical parkland, participate in vital planning processes, and complete major park improvement projects. With funding provided by the Los Angeles County Safe Neighborhood Parks Act of 1996 (Proposition A), the MRCA is the lead agency on many Los Angeles River projects, including projects along Compton Creek.

JOINT POWERS PARTNERS—MRCA



Santa Monica Mountains

Acquisition and Legal Services Division

All legal and real estate services related to appraisals, property purchase and sale contracts, leases, easements, donations, escrow and title matters are handled by this division. This division is also responsible for all legal advice on open meeting laws, California Environmental Quality Act compliance, bidding and contracting, litigation and collection of all judgements and notes.

Natural Resources and Planning Division

The Natural Resources and Planning Division has the agency-wide responsibility to prioritize and negotiate land acquisitions, bring improvement projects to a construction-ready stage, monitor development projects, and prepare grant applications. This division is also responsible for providing resource management guidance, mapping, and the preparation of California Environmental Quality Act documents for improvement projects. Specialized groups within this division include design services, geographic information system mapping, complete habitat restoration service, and biologists. In addition, MRCA members of the division provide all technical and staff support for the various joint powers agencies of which the Conservancy is a member.



JOINT POWERS PARTNERS—MRCA

Construction Division

The Construction Division oversees all of the capital improvement projects funded by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. With a staff of 25, this division has completed five improvement projects this year, including the Arroyo Pescadero Trailhead for the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority, Franklin Canyon improvements, Heavenly Pond, the northern extension of the Las Virgenes View Trail, and the Temescal Canyon Dining Hall. Projects in progress include the Los Angeles River Culinary Arts Center, the Richard Lilliard Studio City Outdoor Classroom, and the historic renovation of the Mentryville Barn.



Education and Interpretation Division

Overall agency functions for interpretation and environmental education are handled by this division, including docent, camp, and ranger interpretive programs. This division is also responsible for program implementation, developing interpretive signage, displays and publications. The Education and Interpretation Division also manages the six major agency interpretive sites: WODOC, Temescal Gateway Park, Ramirez Canyon Park, the Los Angeles River Visitor Center, Towsley Canyon Nature Center, and the Augustus F. Hawkins Natural Park.

WODOC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1980, with the purpose of connecting inner city youth with California's natural resources and introducing them to the natural beauty of the Santa Monica Mountains. The Volunteer Naturalist Program allows the public to participate in educational programs by completing a training program organized by the MRCA and the National Park Service. Participants learn the art of interpretation, lead hikes for school children and host an array of thematic hikes for the general public. All of the education programs are free of charge.

Earth Adventure Camp provides young people the ability to participate in the time honored tradition of overnight camp, with an emphasis on exploring the natural world of our local mountains. The Earth Adventure Camp curriculum is specifically designed for at-risk children with little or no experience with the natural world, and offers a unique combination of environmental science, experiential learning and leadership activities. This program is located in Temescal Gateway Park.

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The Temescal Canyon Field Science Program is a three-day, two-night environmental education program funded by the Los Angeles Systemic Initiative through the Los Angeles Unified School District. The curriculum combines the best of traditional outdoor education and the California State Science Framework and is designed to immerse students in the natural world through a combination of hands-on learning, experiential science and sensory experiences.



Public Affairs Division

Newly designated in fiscal year 2001-2002, the Public Affairs Division oversees external communications, interface with elected officials, public outreach, and events for the Conservancy and MRCA. Functions include planning park dedications, press conferences and tours. The division also produces all agency-wide publications and collateral materials, such as the Parklands and Wildlife Corridor informational map.



JOINT POWERS PARTNERS—MRCA

Operations Division

The MRCA Operations Division is responsible for maintaining all MRCA and Conservancy owned and managed parkland. Law enforcement, fire protection, emergency medical aid, park maintenance, natural resource management, and interpretive programs are just a few of the duties performed by the division. All MRCA park rangers are sworn peace officers and trained wildland firefighters.

In addition to managing MRCA parklands and facilities, the Operations Division provides a wide variety of contract services to several land management agencies, including the City of Los Angeles, the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority, the State Coastal Conservancy, the Eastern Ventura County Conservation Authority and the Santa Clarita Watershed Recreation and Conservation Authority. The MRCA provides these agencies with professional park and recreation resources that directly assist them in providing excellence in service to park visitors.

The responsibilities of the MRCA Operations Division are summarized on the following chart:



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Park Operations Program Data

<i>Project Name</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Big Wild/Corbin Canyon</i>	<i>3,159</i>	<i>Proposition A</i>	<i>\$270,000</i>
<i>Young/Stoney Point</i>	<i>276</i>	<i>Proposition A</i>	<i>\$4,904</i>
<i>Wilson Canyon</i>	<i>242</i>	<i>Proposition A</i>	<i>\$12,000</i>
<i>Wilacre</i>	<i>128</i>	<i>Proposition A</i>	<i>\$10,879</i>
<i>Whittier Open Space Management Contract</i>	<i>1,800</i>	<i>NHPA Operational Funds</i>	<i>\$77,904</i>
<i>Urban Wild</i>	<i>794</i>	<i>Proposition A</i>	<i>\$270,000</i>
<i>Towsley Canyon</i>	<i>273</i>	<i>Proposition A</i>	<i>\$148,000</i>
<i>Top of Topanga</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>Proposition A</i>	<i>\$8,678</i>
<i>Augustus F. Hawkins Natural Park</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>City of Los Angeles Prop. A & K Funds</i>	<i>\$395,413</i>
<i>Temescal Gateway Park</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>Proposition A & MRCA Operations Fund</i>	<i>\$470,836</i>
<i>Sepulveda Pass Trailhead</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Proposition A</i>	<i>\$4,778</i>
<i>Sage Ranch</i>	<i>635</i>	<i>MRCA Operations Fund</i>	<i>\$25,394</i>
<i>River/Elysian Valley</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Proposition A</i>	<i>\$23,978</i>
<i>Ritter Ranch</i>	<i>4,234</i>	<i>MRCA Operations Fund</i>	<i>\$2,397</i>
<i>Red Rock Canyon</i>	<i>250</i>	<i>MRCA Operations Fund</i>	<i>\$21,416</i>
<i>Puente Hills Open Space Management Contract</i>	<i>1,300</i>	<i>NHPA Operational Funds</i>	<i>\$179,968</i>
<i>Mulholland Security Contract</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>City of Los Angeles</i>	<i>\$135,000</i>
<i>Pico Canyon/Mentryville</i>	<i>810</i>	<i>Proposition A & MRCA Operations Fund</i>	<i>\$62,579</i>
<i>Sanitation District Open Space</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Sanitation District Small Contract Fund</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>
<i>Liberty Canyon</i>	<i>311</i>	<i>Proposition A</i>	<i>\$6,300</i>

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Park Operations Program Data (continued)

<i>Project Name</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>La Tuna Canyon</i>	<i>1,100</i>	<i>MRCA Operations Fund</i>	<i>(transfer pending to State Parks)</i>
<i>Happy Camp</i>	<i>3,000</i>	<i>MRCA Operations Fund</i>	<i>\$7,027</i>
<i>Franklin Canyon Park</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>Propositon A & MRCA Operations Fund</i>	<i>\$262,000</i>
<i>Elyria Canyon</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>Proposition A</i>	<i>\$28,000</i>
<i>East Canyon</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>Proposition A</i>	<i>\$42,000</i>
<i>Deerlake Highlands/ Santa Susana</i>	<i>4,815</i>	<i>MRCA Operations Fund</i>	<i>\$60,000</i>
<i>Western Santa Monica Mountains Zone Patrol Operations</i>	<i>7,042</i>	<i>Proposition A</i>	<i>\$77,000</i>
<i>Bosque Del Rio Hondo</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>Proposition A</i>	<i>\$37,000</i>
<i>Total Acres Managed:</i>	<i>30, 562</i>	<i>Total Amount Funded:</i>	<i>\$2,653,451</i>

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Mountains Conservation and Education Authority—MCEA

The Mountains Conservation and Education Authority (MCEA) was created in 1986 as a partnership between the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains. MCEA serves as an additional instrument through which the Conservancy can apply for grant funding for educational programs.

Eastern Ventura County Conservation Authority —EVCCA

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the County of Ventura formed this joint powers authority in 1990 to facilitate the opening and operation of Happy Camp Canyon Regional Park. Happy Camp is a 3,000-acre wilderness area in the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor between Moorpark and Simi Valley in the Santa Susana Mountains. Under an agreement with EVCCA, the MRCA provides ranger services and volunteer trail assistance for the park.

Santa Clarita Watershed Recreation & Conservation Authority—SCWRCA

This joint powers agency was established in 1993 by the City of Santa Clarita and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy in order to cooperatively plan for preservation of open space, trails, parkland, and watershed protection in the Santa Clarita area and the upper Santa Clara River Watershed. This year, SCWRCA finalized the City's and Conservancy's longstanding efforts to acquire Whitney Canyon Ranch. The 442-acre property is the first to be owned by SCWRCA, heralding a new phase in the cooperation between the entities. In addition to its one million dollar contribution to the purchase price of the property, the City also appropriated \$300,000 for initial site improvements, which are being made by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority under a cooperative agreement with SCWRCA.



Whitney Canyon

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Whittier-Puente Hills Conservation Authority—WPHCA

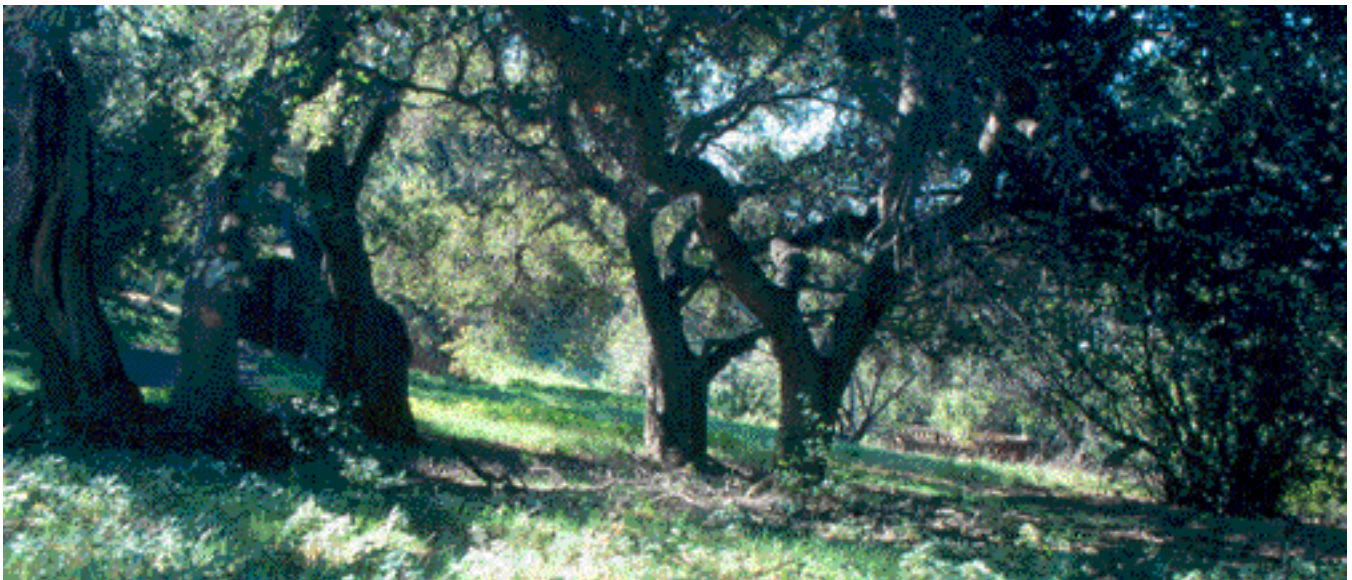
The Whittier-Puente Hills Conservation Authority (WPHCA) is a public entity established to provide for the acquisition and conservation of park and open space lands within the Whittier Hills. WPHCA's governing board consists of two representatives from the City of Whittier, two representatives from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and one public member. Funding for WPHCA projects and acquisitions comes from the County of Los Angeles Safe Neighborhood Parks Act (Proposition A) of 1992 and 1996.

Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority—WCCA

The Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority (WCCA) was established to provide for the proper planning, conservation, environmental protection, and maintenance of lands within the Puente-Chino Hills corridor area. Its goal is to assure that a sufficient continuity of habitat can be preserved to maintain a functioning wildlife corridor made up of about 40,000 acres of land located between the Santa Ana Mountains and Whittier Hills. WCCA's governing board consists of representatives from the cities of Brea, Whittier, Diamond Bar, La Habra Heights, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, California Department of Parks and Recreation, California Department of Fish and Game (ex-officio member), Los Angeles County (ex-officio member), and two public members. A large Advisory Committee meets separately to provide input.

The Puente-Chino Hills ecosystem encompasses portions of four counties. Preserving land in the corridor has been a cooperative endeavor with other public agencies and many nonprofit organizations.

WCCA consistently provides comments on development proposals and other projects to support environmentally sensitive activities in the corridor. In addition, many WCCA members participate in other planning efforts.



Whittier Hills

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Baldwin Hills Regional Conservation Authority—BHRCA

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy joined the County of Los Angeles to form the Baldwin Hills Regional Conservation Authority (BHRCA). The Conservancy is able to apply its vast expertise in land acquisition and preservation to create much-needed recreational areas in the heart of Los Angeles. The mission of BHRCA is to acquire, expand and improve open space within the Baldwin Hills and Ballona Creek, and other natural and recreational areas in the Second Supervisorial District of the County of Los Angeles.

This year, BHRCA purchased eleven acres of prime open space across from Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area in the heart of the Baldwin Hills. Unlike the many other open spaces in the Baldwin Hills that are slated as future park space, this recent purchase has direct public access. The new park site, formerly known as the Lloyd property, is adjacent to the 68-acre Vista Pacifica property acquired by the County of Los Angeles, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and the California Department of Parks and Recreation last year. Purchase of the Lloyd property will complete the acquisition of a greenbelt corridor of properties along the entire northern boundary of the Baldwin Hills.

Other highlights of this year's activities include the release of the Baldwin Hills Park Master Plan for public review. In addition, BHRCA received approval for a grant from the California Department of Parks and Recreation Recreational Trails Program to implement the Ballona Creek Trail and Bikeway Improvement Project.



Ballona Creek